

## GOSSIP OF THE STAGE AND PLAYERS



Thais Lawton in "THE CHIEF"

**E. H. SOTHERN**, who is enacting "Lord Dundreary" at the Booth Theatre, is a connoisseur on old and new jokes. Having had a good deal to do with the jokes of the clowns in Shakespeare and with the jokes of "Dundreary" he is well qualified on the subject. Those who have seen Mr. Sothern as Hamlet and Macbeth would not imagine that he could take interest in a more or less trifling wheeze. But Shakespeare loved a wheeze, and why should not Sothern? Mr. Sothern's father was the greatest jokester of his time. As a practical joker he gained such fame that even a book was written about him, called "Birds of a Feather Flock Together."

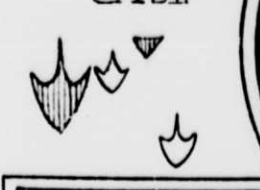
Mr. Sothern has been much amused by the discussion of the "Dundreary" jokes and riddles, inasmuch that a good many folks have gone so far as to contrast the humor of 1850 with that of 1915. The fact is that all of the jokes in "Dundreary" were old jokes in 1850, just as much of the humor of 1915 belongs to the 1850 vintage. Henry Morley did not fall into this error when he reviewed the elder Sothern's performance in London in 1861, for he spoke of "the stale jokes" which the elder Sothern had incorporated in the play. If these jokes were stale jokes in 1861 it is rather curious to find people in 1915 imagining they were new jokes fifty years ago. Some folks seem to have overlooked that the fun of "Dundreary" lies in the fact that a man of his breeding should take delight in a parcel of ancient wheezes, and yet, as Henry Morley said of the elder Sothern, and the same applies equally to the younger, "He contrives, in the midst of all extravagance, to maintain for his name Lord the air of a well-bred, good-natured gentleman."

"Dundreary" isn't so much a matter of wheezes, stale or otherwise, but the fact that the part is overlaid with ludicrous touches of manner and by-play and is so imperceptibly extravagant that shouts of laughter follow almost every look and gesture. "Dundreary" is, in short, a sort of dramatization of our old friend, Joe Miller's Jest Book, and all of Joe Miller's jests were hundreds of years old when Joe Miller made the book a hundred or more years ago. So to say that the jokes of "Dundreary" are typical of the humor of 1850 is sheer nonsense. In order to give Mr. Sothern an opportunity to have his say on the subject of jokes, and "Dundreary" jokes in particular, he was bearded in his dressing room at the Booth Theatre last night. As he was wearing his sweeping wig, it was an excellent time for him to be bearded. The question of jokes was propounded to "Dundreary" and he replied as follows:

"Wisdom is preserved and handed down from generation to generation. So why not the same as to humor? All jokes—at least all good jokes—are old, some older than the pyramids. The old jokes are old because they are good. They may be good in spite of being old. Let us admit that the reviewers are weary of old jokes. Shall these jokes be thrust into the everlasting scrap heap on that account? This brings forth a momentous question. How about the old jokes which are now to them, as old folks laugh at old jokes which recall their youth. It is an inherent trait of *Dundreary*, a part and parcel of his peculiar and childish nature, to collect old jokes and see fun in them. To enjoy these old wheezes is part of his character. One of my reviewers, a friend bewailed the resurrection of these old jokes. He said, 'How does a dog wag his tail?' and of taking of bunions, where's your mother? But these jokes have given joy to thousands of simple folks for generations, and over them some vastly wiser men have laughed themselves even into greater wisdom."

Lou Tellegen, cosmopolite a citizen of the world, man without a country, is no more. Henceforth he is to be just Lou Tellegen, American citizen, at present playing the stellar role in "The War Case" at the Maxine Elliott Theatre. Which metamorphosis was recently effected by Mr. Lou Tellegen receiving from certain legal authorities naturalization papers, which confer on him the various privileges of borrowing money from a United States Consul when abroad, voting for woman suffrage every time that question becomes the political issue and standing up in patriotic enthusiasm every time he is played in "Butterfly." It isn't an easy matter to take on the common little prefix "Mr.," and divest oneself of those ornate if not romantic affixes above

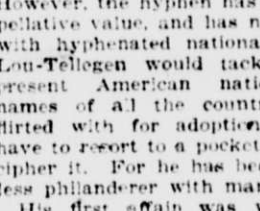
**Maude Handford** in "THE WARE CASE"



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**Viola Roach** in "HOBSON'S CHOICE"



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mentioned which Mr. Lou Tellegen has borne so nonchalantly for so many years. Indeed, it is doubtful if he would have done so had he not been permitted to retain the little decorative hyphen in the middle of his name. However, the hyphen has only an appellate value, and has nothing to do with hyphenated nationality. If Mr. Lou Tellegen would tack on to his present American nationality the name of all the countries he has flirted with for adoption, one would have to resort to a pocket atlas to decipher it. For he has been a shameless philanderer with many countries.

His first affair was with Greece, where he was born of a Greek father and a Dutch mother. The affair was of short duration, for he was taken at an early age to his mother's country, and for a while betrayed quite an affection for it. But as he grew into manhood this became merely a puppy love affair, and France across the border was the next object of his affection. To Paris he went and entered the St. Cyr Military Academy, destined to become a soldier. Dark-eyed, passionate Spain was too near for him to give himself up completely to France and so one fine day he flung destinies and constancies to the wind and flew to Madrid, donned the spangled uniform of the toreador and entered the bull ring, a perfect Don Jose. But old flames still burned in his breast and he returned to deserted France and urbanely settled down to a course of study in the National Conservatoire, which meant that he had quite forgotten that he was to become a soldier. By the time he had graduated from the Conservatoire, played a season at the Odon and became leading man for the Divine Sarah, France really began to take the affair seriously. Indeed other countries began to take the affair seriously and some even began to call him French. But his philandering habits with nations knew no moral bounds. He had a little affair with Germany, then made a short excursion to England. Then youthful lust, America entered his life. He began by making little, flattering overtures to it by embracing it with vaudeville tours as leading man for Mme. Bernhardt. He tried to remain true to France, but he had left his heart in America, and returned to it in a few years, setting down to a most sincere courtship. America was not to be trifled with like her Continental sisters, and insisted that he enter into a respectable, legal alliance. However, Mr. Lou Tellegen was a most willing swain and his affection for the new country was really sincere. In fact, he hears his appellation of "American" with pride and distinction.

By all the prerogatives of heredity Harold de Becker, who plays the role of Albert Prosser in "Hobson's Choice" at the Comedy Theatre, ought to be the leading tenor in a musical comedy. Anybody whose grandfather was a head singer at the court of the King of Belgium—and such good singer, over, he did not neglect the other arts. First of all he is an actor and has been one since he was 9 years old. Then he is a water color artist and a clever sketcher in black and white, and now he has started as a sculptor. Moreover, since some of the ability to use one's fists scientifically an art, it might be well to mention that he places amateur boxing among his professional assets.

Mr. de Becker came to this country in 1901 with Charles Hawtree in "The Message From Mars." With him came his mother, Mrs. Kate de Becker, who



Elizabeth Valentine in "LORD DUNDREARY"

was last seen in "Prunella," and his two sisters, Nesta and Marie, who like-wise have been in American productions. Since then he has appeared in "The Servant in the House," with Henry Miller; "The Toast of the Town," with Viola Allen; "The Tycoon," with Walker Whiteside, and last season with Pauline Frederick in "Innocence."

## MOTION PICTURE MAN WARNS

Declares There Are Breakers Ahead for the Public.

While alluring promises of enormous profits for the public are being made by some film manufacturing concerns Samuel Goldfish, executive

head of the Lucky Feature Play Company (the firm which brought out Gertrude Farrar as a screen star), declares that the motion picture industry is on the eve of its greatest trials. Mr. Goldfish declares there is a big element in the photoplay industry that is opposed to the exploitation of the public.

"It is about time the public knew," said he yesterday, "what many persons within the photoplay industry know: that there is more money being lost right now in the motion picture business than there is money being made."

Mr. Goldfish declared that the photoplay industry was not only suffering at the present time from overproduction but that it was being unjustly and undeservedly attacked by uninformed writers for some of the magazines, who have entirely misplaced the motion picture as an amusement and as an art.

"Perhaps my statement that there is more money being lost in motion pictures than there is being made will be a surprise to a great many persons," continued Mr. Goldfish. "But it is true, and the time is not far distant when the public will learn its lesson in financial loss and when the motion picture industry will learn the effects of its folly by a severe and thorough readjustment of conditions."

"At the present time in the United States there is more motion picture film manufactured than there is film exhibited. No industry can long withstand without upheaval such an unhealthy condition."

"As regards the attacks against the photoplay art from writers who are misquoting and misrepresenting the aims of the men engaged in the industry, I think I am reflecting the opinion of other manufacturers when I say we are concerned only with the effect of these attacks. One of the greatest factors in the growth and development of the motion picture has been the faith which the public has extended to earnest effort. Consequently any sustained criticism that is unjust and untrue might serve to weaken this strong bond which the years have built between the public and the motion picture."

Mr. Goldfish said that much of the misconception of the present business and artistic status of the photoplay industry has been due to a general belief that before the present great development ends the motion picture will have supplanted the stage, and the rewards previously reserved to the theatre will come to the motion picture.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," said the Lucky executive. "The motion picture does not supplant and displace the stage. Nor is it the desire, the aim or the dream of the men producing the art that it should. Motion pictures and photoplays are a separate and distinct form of entertainment from the stage and ever will remain so. Each has its separate mission to perform and each will thrive

so long as it confines itself to its own sphere."

"At the present time photoplay versions of the great operas, plays and stories with well known stars in the leading roles supply a general demand throughout the world for popular and splendid entertainment. Through the medium of the photoplay thousands and hundreds of thousands from whom heretofore these masterpieces of literature and the drama in acted form have been withheld are now seeing them. But to say that this means the death knell of the drama is ridiculous. On the contrary, I should say that the photoplay is one of the greatest agencies in stimulating an interest in the drama. Having seen great actors on the screen and beautifully produced pieces, the public is raising its standard of taste for these things. No longer is it satisfied with the inferior production and with bad acting."

"The public that has learned through experience to choose between good plays and bad plays, also has learned to distinguish between good photoplays and inferior photoplays. Without becoming personal I believe with modesty I might refer to the throngs which crowded the Strand Theatre during the engagements there of the film productions of Gertrude Farrar in 'Carmen' and Mary Pickford in 'Madame Butterfly,' and the long run of 'Birth of a Nation' at the Liberty. These are instances of the public's support of especially worthy photodramatic efforts."

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The bill of comparative comedy now being given by the Washington Square Players at the Bandbox Theatre will be the subject for the discussions conducted this month by the Drama League at the public libraries. Last year these meetings proved very popular and this season a number of libraries have been added to the list of discussion centres. Only plays bul-

etized by the Drama League are discussed. The meetings are open to the public. The leaders of the discussions in December are Hiram K. Moskowitz, Barrett Clark, Mrs. Josephine Wells, Mrs. Clara Ruge, Mrs. C. H. Strauss, Curt Hansen, Elwood J. Harlan and Edward Friedman.

To-night at the Neighborhood Playhouse the Olive Mead Quartet (Olive Mead, first violin; Vera Fonoff, second violin; Gladys North, viola; Lillian Littlehales, violoncello) will give a concert which will include the Tchaikowski quartet in E flat minor, the Beethoven cavatina in B flat major and the Schumann quartet in A minor.

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## VARIETY IN BROOKLYN.

**BUSHWICK THEATRE**—Mrs. Langtry in her sketch, "Ashes," comes to the Bushwick Theatre this week in a continuation of her vaudeville travels. Others on the bill will be Lillian Kingsbury in "The Coward," Donahue and Stewart, Marie Fitzgibbon, William Pruette, the Amoros Sisters, Fields and Holliday, Kiet and De Mont and the Kurtis Rooster.

**ORPHEUM THEATRE**—Grace La Rue, Dave Kramer and George Merello, pianist; Harry Cooper in "The Mail Carrier," Bankoff and Girle, Robbie Fordone, Harry Girard and company in "The Luck of a Totem," Werner Amoras company, Perry and Heath, Anna Laughlin and William Saxton and the Gladiators.

**PROSPECT THEATRE**—Frank McIntyre, Emma Carus, Hunting and Frances, Harry Gilford, Adelaide, Hermann, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, Wilde, Howard, Kibbel and Herbert, Foley and O'Neill. Sunday concerts today as usual.

**STAR THEATRE**—"The Worth of a Nation," a burlesque on "The Birth of a Nation," will be seen this week at the Star Theatre, presented by the Americans company. The second half of the show is called "Girls and Jingles."

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